

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 SMS-01 CIAE-00 PM-05
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R 211558Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5822
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT POUCH
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 19959

E.O. 11652: GDS
AGS: MILI, PEPR, UR, YS, YE, ET
SUBJECT: SOVIET CONCERN ABOUT MILITARY ACTION
AGAINST PDRY

1. INCREASED EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE
FOREIGN INTERVENTION AGAINST PDRY HAVE RECENTLY
APPEARED IN SOVIET PRESS. IZVESTIYA AUGUST 18
CARRIED TASS REPORT FROM BEIRUT OPENING WITH FLAT
STATEMENT "U.S. TOGETHER WITH NUMBER OF REACTIONARY
ARAB STATES HAVE PREPARED A PLAN OF ARMED
AGGRESSION" AGAINST PDRY. REPORT CITES BEIRUT NEWS-
PAPER "AN-NIDA" THAT DETAILED PLANS FOR ARMED INTER-
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VENTION WERE DISCUSSED AT MEETINGS BETWEEN SAUDI
DEFENSE MINISTER AND AMERICAN CHARGE D'AFFAIRES IN
RIYADH AND BETWEEN SADAT AND SAUDI PRINCE FAHD.
PRAVDA SAME DAY ELABORATED SLIGHTLY BY REPORTING
THAT SAUDI TROOPS HAVE INCREASED ALONG PDRY'S
BORDER AND AT A MILITARY BASE SHARURA (PHONETIC)
WHERE SEVERAL THOUSAND SOLDIERS, TANKS, ARTILLERY

PIECES ALLEGEDLY

ARE GATHERED. BEDOUIN TRIBESMEN, WHO HAVE "ALREADY CARRIED OUT PROVOCATIVE ATTACKS" ON PDRY TERRITORY, ARE ALSO DESCRIBED AS IN THE BORDER AREA.

2. PRAVDA "INTERNATIONAL WEEK" COLUMN AUGUST 20 MAKES A PASSING, AND LOWER-KEY REFERENCE TO PREPARATION OF PLANS FOR AGGRESSION AGAINST PDRY AND THE "OVERTHROW OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM" AND ALSO CITES CAIRO PAPER "AL-GUMKHURIYA" TO EFFECT THAT SAUDI ARABIA, OMAN AND OAE HAVE DECIDED TO ESTABLISH A MILITARY FRONT AGAINST ARAB "PROGRESSIVE REGIMES," ABOVE ALL, SOUTH YEMEN. THE "INTERNATIONAL WEEK" COLUMN, AUTHORED THIS PAST SUNDAY BY SOVIET MIDEAST EXPERT DEMCHENKO, DOES NOT REPEAT THE EARLIER CHARGE OF U.S. INTERVENTION PLANS.

3. COMMENT: NET EFFECT OF SOVIET COMMENT OF PAST FEW DAYS IS TO LEAVE IMPRESSION OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN SOUTHERN ARABIAN PENINSULA, WHICH COULD AT ANYTIME ERUPT INTO WAR THREATENING PDRY REGIME. THE PRESS DOES NOT STRIKE ALARMIST TONES, HOWEVER, AND ONE WONDERS WHETHER SOVIETS ARE LESS CONCERNED ABOUT PARTICULAR DEVELOPMENTS THAN ABOUT REINFORCING A GENERAL POINT ABOUT CONTINUING U.S.-ARAB REACTIONARY MACHINATIONS IN MIDDLE EAST. "INTER-CONFIDENTIAL

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NATIONAL WEEK COLUMN, GENERALLY MORE AUTHORITATIVE IN REFLECTING OFFICIAL CONCERNS THAN TASS REPORTS SENT FROM ABROAD, DROPS THE LEVEL OF CONCERN SLIGHTLY, BY NOT MENTIONING THE U.S., ALTHOUGH AUTHOR DEMCHENKO CRITICIZES THE PENTAGON ELSEWHERE IN THE PIECE FOR WANTING TO ESTABLISH BASES AT HAIFA AND IN THE SINAI AND ALSO WANTING TO PUT AN AMERICAN MILITARY CONTINGENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST AS A "GUARANTEE FOR A POSSIBLE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT." TOON

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